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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navajo Parks and Recreation Department says “Goodbye” to a long-time Friend and Co-Worker

Window Rock, AZ – May 6, 2011 – The Navajo Parks and Recreation Department lost a long-time friend and co-worker on Tuesday May 3, 2011 in Tucson, AZ at U of A Medical Center. Dave James provided 23 years of hard work and dedication to Navajo Parks and Recreation Department. In 1988, he started as a Carpenter and worked his way up to Construction Inspector supervising the Department’s Construction and Maintenance program.

Dave began his career as a Carpenter and was immediately promoted to Construction Supervisor. In 2001, Dave became the Construction Inspector of the Department’s \$12 million dollar Capital Improvement Projects at tribal park and recreation and monument areas.

While employed with the department, Dave was involved with and overseen many projects. Some of those projects included: administering the construction of the Food Pavilion at the Navajo Nation Fair Grounds, pioneering the Wild Horse Race Event at the Dean C. Jackson Memorial Arena, directing the assembly of the “Discover Navajo” Pavilion at the 2001 Winter Olympics at Salt Lake City, UT, PRCA ProRodeo Coordinator for many of the Fourth of July Celebrations and the 1st Annual Treaty Days Celebration, and constructing a Navajo exposition at the Indian Village for the 2008 Super Bowl Celebration in Phoenix, AZ. He also served as the Navajo Nation Fair Manager for several years and produced the two annual fair events.



Dave James. Pictured for the Justin’s Best Footing Award.

Dave James had many accomplishments within the department. The most substantial of his accomplishments was his involvement in the annual PRCA Pro Rodeo and Youth Celebration. Ray Russell, Department Manager explains, “under the ten years of Mr. James’ involvement with the ProRodeo the PRCA ProRodeo recognized the Navajo Nation with the Justin Boots Best Footing Award, four times out of the ten years. With his skills of the Rodeo production at the professional level, the Navajo Nation was privileged to be awarded the prestigious award from the PRCA and WPRA.”

The Justin’s Best Footing Award entails the grooming of the arena dirt to perfection for the safety of the stock and contestants. It is a national award given by the PRCA. With Dave’s efforts, the Navajo Nation has the honor of having one of the nations top rodeo committees put forth extra effort to ensure their rodeo has the safest and most consistent ground possible.

Dave grew up on a ranch where cattle punching and tending to livestock was a way of life. Learning the ways of a rancher opened many doors for Dave. He began as a Bull Rider and later found his niche as a Bareback rider. Although, an injury cut his career short he was unstoppable. Dave continued to be apart of the Rodeo in anyway he could.

Dave was the department’s PRCA Rodeo Coordinator. Being the PRCA coordinator requires an immense amount of communication with the Rodeo realm and must be knowledgebase of the latest trends in the Rodeo circuit. Dave did his job so well that his efforts were nationally recognized. In 2008, Dave was nominated as PRCA’s Committeeman of the Year. In an article written by Rick Abasta, former employee of department, Dave stated, “Year in and year out, I try to do my best to put Window Rock, Arizona on the map. I’m just giving back to the sport of rodeo.”

When Dave was not busy with Rodeo, he delegated construction projects to maintain the appearance and safety of tribal parks. The employees of the department describe him as respectful, intelligent, kind hearted and family oriented.

Putting the two things that were most important to Dave together; family and Rodeo, Dave once said in an interview, “Rodeo is a family thing. The sport of Rodeo will continue to grow on the Navajo Nation, as long as we’re teaching our kids the responsibility of caring for animals and sticking together as a family.” Sticking together as a family is a teaching Dave has illustrated and bestowed upon the department. In return for his teachings; majority of his fellow co-workers rallied to donate their time and efforts to Dave’s family in expression of their appreciation and respect for him.

Mr. Russell worked with Dave James since June 2001. He stated, “the department made tremendous strides in the past ten years – he played a major role in the significant achievements.” When asked what he will miss the most about Dave’s work ethics, Russell stated, “His intelligence, loyalty, knowledge and wisdom. Dave was a very respectful man and will be missed from this department. It will be a huge task in filling that void.”

For more information contact Delilah Goodluck, Public Information Officer at 928-871-6647.